

Skew Arch Bridge
Allegheny Portage Railroad National Historic Site
Crossing Incline No. 6, at old US 22, on E
slope of Allegheny Mountain
Cresson Vicinity
Blair County
Pennsylvania

HAER No. PA-239

HAER
PA
7-CRES.V,
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

HAER
PA,
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SKEW ARCH BRIDGE

HAER No. PA-239

Location: Allegheny Portage Railroad National Historic Site, Crossing Incline No. 6, on old US 22, on E slope of Allegheny Mountain, Cresson Vicinity, Blair County, Pennsylvania

Date of Construction: 1833

Builder: Fenlon, Darling, and Company, contractor
(J. Fenlon, A. and J. Darling)
R. Klininmouth, builder

Present Owner: The National Park Service

Present Use: Turnpike Bridge

Significance: An outstanding example of an early stone-masonry turnpike bridge in western Pennsylvania, the Skew Arch Bridge was completed in 1833 and spanned Incline Plane No. 6 of the Allegheny Portage Railroad.

Project Information: In February 1987, the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) and the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) began a multi-year historical and architectural documentation project in southwestern Pennsylvania. Carried out in conjunction with America's Industrial Heritage Project (AIHP), HAER undertook a comprehensive inventory of Blair and Cambria counties as the first step in identifying the region's surviving historic engineering works and industrial resources.

The results of this project have been published in Blair County and Cambria County, Pennsylvania: An Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial Sites (1990), edited by Gray Fitzsimons and produced by HABS/HAER for the National Park Service.

See also HABS No. PA-1232, SKEW ARCH BRIDGE, Allegheny Portage Railroad National Historic Site, Cresson Vicinity, Blair County, Pennsylvania. This file contains three photographs taken in 1965 and five earlier drawings of the bridge previously transmitted to the Library of Congress.

History:

This bridge carried the Huntingdon-Blairsville Turnpike, also called the Northern Turnpike, across Inclined Plane No. 6 of the Allegheny Portage Railroad on the east slope of Allegheny Mountain. It was originally designed, and partially built, to be perpendicular to the incline, but in 1833 its alignment was altered to the present skew arrangement, to facilitate the traffic on the steep grade of the turnpike. The firm of Fenlon, Darling, and Company was the contractor for this work. In 1849 one of the wing walls collapsed and was rebuilt. The ashlar stone was cut from local sandstone quarries and the bridge was constructed without mortar. The overall length of the bridge measures 70'. The width at the ends of the curved abutments measures 43'.

Sources:

- Brown, Sharon A. Historic Structure Report: Allegheny Portage Railroad National Historic Site, Pennsylvania. National Park Service, 1984.
- Toogood, Anna Cox. Historic Resource Study: Allegheny Portage Railroad National Historic Site, Pennsylvania. (Denver, Colorado: National Park Service, May 1973).
- Heydinger, Earl J. History Research Project: Comprehensive History of the Pennsylvania Canal System, with Particular Attention to the Allegheny Portage Railroad - Portion: Planes Nos. 6, 8, and 10. (Unpublished Report, National Park Service, June 1966. Available from NPS-Washington Office, Cultural Resources Bibliography).
- NPS, List of Classified Structures Report. "Skew Arch Bridge". Available at Allegheny Portage Railroad National Historic Site Interpretive Center.

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